

Attitude and Readiness of Gifted and Talented Students on Differentiated Instruction in Malay Language Teaching and Learning

Sikap dan Kesediaan dalam Kalangan Pelajar Pintar Cerdas dan Berbakat Terhadap Kaedah Pengajaran Terbeza dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the attitude and readiness of gifted and talented students towards teaching and learning in learning in Malay language subjects. A total of 60 students in Pusat PERMATApintar Negara Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in this survey study. The data were analyzed descriptively using frequency, means, percentage and standard deviation. The analysis found that the attitude and the readiness of the students were at high levels. Inferential analysis using t-test and correlation found that there was a significant readiness differences between male and female students towards differentiated instruction in the teaching and learning of Malay language. While there was no significant difference between male and female towards differentiated instruction approach in the teaching and learning of Malay language. From the analysis, differentiated instruction approach was accepted at the Pusat PERMATApintar UKM and students showed a tendency to study an advanced Malay language. Therefore, the instructors are expected to create a more conducive learning environment and appropriate differentiated instruction strategies in order to enhance students' interest in learning Malay language.

Keywords: Attitude; readiness; gifted students; differentiated instruction; teaching; learning; Malay language

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji sikap dan kesediaan dalam kalangan pelajar pintar dan berbakat terhadap pengajaran dan pembelajaran dalam mata pelajaran Bahasa Melayu. Selain itu, kajian tinjauan ini juga bertujuan untuk mengkaji tahap perbezaan sikap dan kesediaan pelajar terhadap perbezaan berdasarkan jantina. Penyelidikan ini dijalankan dengan menggunakan borang kaji selidik yang melibatkan 60 orang pelajar di Pusat PERMATApintar UKM. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis dengan menggunakan Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) versi 19.0. Data telah dianalisis secara deskriptif menggunakan kekerapan, min, peratus dan sisihan piawai. Analisis deskriptif mendapati min sikap dan kesediaan pelajar berada pada tahap tinggi. Analisis inferensi menggunakan ujian-t dan korelasi mendapati terdapat perbezaan kesediaan yang signifikan antara pelajar lelaki dan perempuan terhadap pengajaran pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu. Manakala tidak terdapat perbezaan sikap yang signifikan antara pelajar lelaki dan perempuan terhadap pengajaran dan pembelajaran dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu. Daripada analisis menunjukkan pendekatan terbeza diterima di Pusat PERMATApintar UKM dan pelajar menunjukkan kecenderungan untuk mempelajarinya dengan lebih mendalam dalam Bahasa Melayu. Oleh itu, diharapkan guru dapat mencipta suasana pembelajaran yang lebih kondusif menggunakan pendekatan terbeza di dalam kelas supaya dapat meningkatkan minat pelajar untuk mempelajari Bahasa Melayu.

Kata kunci: Sikap; kesediaan; pintar cerdas dan berbakat; pengajaran terbeza; bahasa Melayu

INTRODUCTION

Gifted and talented students are highly valuable to a country. The failure to provide gifted and talented students with appropriate education would jeopardize their potential and thus it is a lost for that particular nation as a whole. If a proper emphasis is not given towards the teaching and learning of

this type of students, their actual potential will not be developed.

The term gifted is originated from the word 'genio', which refers to mixed ability of an individual but not necessarily unique (Friedman and Rogers 1998). According to Porter (1999) this group of children are categorized as gifted and talented. Gardner's (2006) theory of multiple intelligence

includes not only the ability of logical-mathematical or linguistic intelligence, but also musical, visual-spatial, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist.

In brief, gifted and talented students refer to students who have the ability to excel in certain aspects and at the same time apply to groups of students who have demonstrated excellence in various fields. In simplest terms, it can be said that gifted is a form of ability or trait that an individual has demonstrated excellence at certain levels. According to Renzuli (2002), gifted and talented ability is not exclusively permanent but evolving depending on the environment in which the particular children, or students, are.

The education system has been designed to develop students' individual potential for comprehensive and integrated academic, emotional, spiritual and intellectual. Similar to other students, gifted and talented students also have diverse attitudes and readiness of acceptance of teaching and learning methods. According to Reis and Renzulli (1991), gifted and talented students are students who are capable of learning in various aspects including intellectual, spiritual, creative, scientific, fine arts, social leadership and motor senses. Furthermore, the gifted and talented students are also an exceptional individual in the aspects of cognitive processing.

Teaching and learning (R&D) that emphasize thinking skills is the core of learning (McGregor 2007). The often-used approach to teaching and learning for gifted and talented learners is the differentiated teaching methods. Through this method, teaching and learning activities can be adapted to the various levels of the needs of a student in the learning class. George (1992) defines the differentiated approach as a process to assess the needs of students and tailor the learning experience with these requirements. Thus, this approach seeks to provide challenge at an appropriate level of student learning needs so that learning activities can take place among them optimally. Through differentiated instruction, gifted and talented learners can develop their thinking skills during learning. In addition, the issue of boring and non-challenging teaching and learning can be overcome. Through this approach is able to develop the potential of gifted and talented learners.

Recognizing the importance of differentiated approach in the teaching and learning of Malay language among gifted and talented, more researches

about the practice of differentiated instruction need to be conducted in order to help teachers to improve their pedagogical skills especially of providing differentiated instruction.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Malay language is a compulsory subject for all students in Malaysia. This is because Malay language is a part of the requirement to pass the national standardized test i.e. Malaysia Certificate of Education. Thus, gifted students too need to learn the Malay language subject. Differentiated instruction provides a platform that every teacher can use with smart and talented students, as well as for teaching and learning the Malay language. Differentiated approach could serve as the basis for meeting the needs of gifted and talented students to think and move at a high level.

A person with high cognitive abilities does not always, at any one time be considered intelligent. A person is considered to be gifted if he, not only has a high cognitive ability, but also can even use gestures that go well (Rosadah 2009). But, individuals are sometimes faced with a situation where he is prevented from the opportunity to use their natural capabilities that are high level. Therefore students do not have the opportunity to showcase the ability or potential. This is because the situation or environment does not support their learning needs (Gagne 1995; Piirto 1999). Therefore, students will not be displaying their giftedness nature if the environment does not support the use of natural ability.

The use of differentiated instruction in teaching Malay language will help the development of the potential of gifted and talented. If this is not the case, it may be due to problems in the differentiated teaching and learning processes implemented. This might stem from the environment which is not helpful, and attitudes among students themselves who hold to the wrong value or interest.

Therefore, teachers need to master differentiated instruction in order to meet the needs of gifted and talented students in Malay language teaching. Teaching is focused on providing information, completing syllabus and pursuing excellence in the mainstream education; and this should be changed. Novak (1990) argues that a method of teaching should make the teaching more effective and meaningful. Teaching should

encourage thinking skills rather than just a rote technique. Through the study of Zamri and Nor Razah (2011), the context R&D's of questioning should be able to promote interaction between teachers and students effectively. Therefore, a teacher who specializes in differentiated instruction should be able to effectively discuss, guide and drive the imagination of students.

There is a handful of students who are just learning to get good results in examinations (Fong Chew Peng 2006). This situation causes students to fail to think critically and creatively. The problem now arises because the teaching approach does not meet the requirement and does not challenge students' thinking ability. In the process of teacher-cantered teaching, students become passive or one-way thinking. Students prefer to be listeners and only expect teachers to gain knowledge. The situation led to uninteresting teaching and learning.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study was designed to investigate the impact of differentiated instruction on students' attitude and readiness in the teaching and learning of Malay language.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the attitude of the gifted students towards differentiated teaching and learning of Malay language?
2. What is the readiness level of the gifted students towards differentiated teaching and learning of Malay language?
3. How does the attitude of the gifted students towards differentiated teaching and learning of Malay language differ in terms of gender?
4. How does the readiness level of the gifted students towards differentiated teaching and learning of Malay language differ in terms of gender?

METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is a survey using a questionnaire. A set of questionnaires is used for data collection purposes. The survey design is used to get information about the background of the

respondents, attitudes and readiness to differentiated approach to teaching and learning. The use of survey methods using questionnaire facilitates researchers to collaborate with respondents. In addition, the researchers used a questionnaire as an instrument more easily administered and convenient to collect and analyse the data. The study was conducted at the College PERMATAPINTAR SMEs, with a total of 60 students selected as the sample for this study. Questionnaire instrument used in this study. The instrument is modified from the Khairuddin survey (2011). The instrument consists of three parts, the respondents' background of study, attitude and the willingness of students to teaching and differentiated learning. The Likert scale used is 1 = Strongly Disagree (STS), 2 = Disagree (TS), 3 = Undecided (TP), 4 = Agree (S), 5 = Strongly Agree (SS). In this study, a pilot study was conducted with a circulation of 10 sets of questionnaires distributed to the students involved. To obtain validity and reliability, the data obtained through pilot study were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19 to obtain the reliability value, Cronbach alpha. Analysis performed found alpha Cronbach value exceeded 0.070. The alpha value of attitude is 0.810 and the readiness is 0.820. The alpha value obtained through this pilot study was high, 0.845 higher than 0.8. Alpha values adopted by most researchers is at least 0.70 (Chua Yan Piau 2008). Data analysis is done through descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistics. This descriptive analysis is used to describe the demographics of research samples such as percentages and frequencies. Descriptive statistical analysis is also based on mean score interpretation. This analysis is used to examine the level of knowledge, attitudes and readiness of the students towards different teaching and learning approaches. Mean value finding will be interpreted to three levels as shown in Table 1. The inference analysis used is t-test. Pearson correlation is used to see the relationship between the variables studied.

TABLE 1. Min score for stage

MIN	LEVEL
1.00 - 2.33	LOW
2.34 - 3.66	MODERATE
3.67 - 5.00	HIGH

FINDINGS

STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD
DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING AND LEARNING
OF MALAY LANGUAGE

Table 2 shows the mean scores for the students' attitude towards differentiated instructional approach when learning in Malay language. The highest mean of students' attitudes towards differentiated instructional approach is item 1 "instructor teaching methods of teaching and learning methods are

differentiated, very encouraging and stimulating me to think in learning the Malay language with a mean of 4.50 and standard deviation 0.549. The lowest mean was in item 5 "The instructor always make a clear explanation of the concept of Malay language learning using differentiated teaching and learning" with a mean of 3.89 and standard deviation 0.736. The findings show that the level of students' attitudes toward differentiated teaching and learning of Malay language is high, with a total mean of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 0.678.

TABLE 2. Level of Student Attitudes toward differentiated teaching and learning of Malay language

NO	ITEM	MIN	SP	STAGE LEVELS
1.	Differentiated teaching and learning strategies are very encouraging, and stimulate me to think.	4.50	0.549	Height
2.	Differentiated teaching and learning strategies make me want to learn and succeed in Malay.	4.15	0.703	Height
3.	Differentiated teaching and learning strategies improve the mastery of my concepts and facts in Malay.	4.25	0.709	Height
4.	Different teaching and learning are suitable to be applied in the teaching and learning of Malay language subject.	4.13	0.694	Height
5.	The instructor always makes a clear description of the Malay language learning concept using Differentiated teaching and learning strategies.	3.89	0.703	Height
6.	Through Differentiated teaching and learning strategies, teacher always gives me the opportunity to give insights, ideas and creativity during Malay language lesson.	4.13	0.694	Height
7.	I am very interested in learning Malay language when teachers apply differentiated teaching and learning strategies.	4.08	0.649	Height
8.	I think differentiated teaching and learning strategies can increase the level of mastery of Malay language each student.	4.25	0.724	Height
Overall Min		4.17	0.678	Height

THE LEVEL OF READINESS OF STUDENTS
TOWARDS DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING AND
LEARNING STRATEGIES

Table 3 shows the mean score for student readiness level towards Differentiated teaching and learning strategies. As shown in Table 3, the highest mean for students' readiness towards Differentiated teaching and learning strategies is the 10th item "Differentiated group work assignment increases my understanding of Malay language", with a mean of 4.34 and a

standard deviation of 0.666. The lowest mean was in item 5 "I always read the Malay language related material when instructor use Differentiated teaching and learning strategies in class", with a mean of 3.73 and standard deviation 0.673. The findings show that the level of preparedness of students towards the use of differentiated instruction in the teaching and learning of Malay language is high, with a total mean of 4.08 and the standard deviation of 0.693.

TABLE 3. The level of students' readiness towards Differentiated teaching and learning strategies in Malay Language Learning

NO	ITEM	MIN	SP	STAGE LEVELS
1.	I always participate in activities during the Differentiated teaching and learning of Malay language in the classroom.	4.13	0.694	Height
2.	I always participate in a question-and-answer session when the instructors were using the Differentiated teaching and learning strategies in the classroom.	4.08	0.649	Height
3.	I always participate in work interactions when instructors use Differentiated teaching and learning strategies in the classroom.	4.15	0.703	Height
4.	I have always been given the opportunity to ask questions during the learning session when the instructors use Differentiated teaching and learning strategies.	3.93	0.770	Height
5.	I always read the related Malay language materials when the instructors use Differentiated teaching and learning strategies in the classroom.	3.73	0.673	Height
6.	I am always encouraged to answer enrichment questions after completing the Malay language learning session using Differentiated teaching and learning strategies in the classroom.	4.02	0.710	Height
7.	The Malay language trainings provided by the instructors using the Differentiated teaching and learning strategies stimulate my higher level cognitive thinking skills.	4.10	0.703	Height
8.	Malay language activity conducted using Differentiated teaching and learning strategies help me to solve learning problems.	4.07	0.696	Height
9.	Differentiated group work assignment of Malay language is more challenging to me.	4.27	0.673	Height
10.	Differentiated group work assignment increases my understanding of Malay language.	4.34	0.666	Height
Overall Min		4.08	0.693	Height

1. How does the attitude of the gifted students towards differentiated teaching and learning of Malay language differ in terms of gender?
2. How does the readiness level of the gifted students towards differentiated teaching and learning of Malay language differ in terms of gender?

STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF MALAY LANGUAGE IN TERMS OF GENDER

Ho1: There was no significant difference in the students' attitude toward differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language in terms of gender.

Table 4 shows the mean value of the attitude of male students (mean = 4.10) and the mean value of the attitude of female students (mean = 4.14). This shows that there is no significant difference between male and female students' attitude towards differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language. The t-test shows t is 3.901, $p > 0.05$.

Therefore, Ho2 is accepted. This means that there exists no significant difference in the students' attitude toward differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language in terms of gender. The attitude of male and female students towards differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language is at the same level. Malay Language Learning does not affect students' attitudes. There are other factors that affect girls and boys in learning English.

TABLE 4. Student attitudes toward differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language in terms of gender

ASPECT	GENDER	N	MIN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T	P
ATTITUDES	Male	34	4.10	0.476	3.901	0.813
	Girl	26	4.14	0.456		

* $p < 0.05$

STUDENT READINESS TOWARD DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF MALAY LANGUAGE IN TERMS OF GENDER

Ho2: There was no significant difference in the students' readiness toward differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language in terms of gender.

Table 5 shows the mean readiness of male students at 3.85, while the mean readiness of female students at 4.10. This shows that there was a significant difference between the mean of readiness between the male and female students' readiness toward differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language. The t-test shows t at 4.719, $p < 0.05$.

TABLE 5. Student Readiness toward differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language in terms of gender

ASPECT	GENDER	N	MIN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T	P
READINESS	Male	34	3.85	0.524	4.719	0.002
	Girl	26	4.10	0.394		

Therefore, Ho2 is rejected. It is meaningful, significant differences in the students' readiness toward differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language in terms of gender. This shows that boys and girls have different readiness toward differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language. However, female students are more ready to accept differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language compared to male students.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF MALAY LANGUAGE

The study found that students' attitudes towards differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language are at a high level with a total mean score of 4.17 and standard deviation of 0.678. Azizi (2007) states that attitude is the value of belief that affects the individual's way of responding to something. Positive or negative responses to social objects are influenced by attitude. The practice of differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language managed to change the attitude of students who were not interested to be interested in the subject of Malay language. Therefore, differentiated teaching approach is very beneficial in the classroom to

enhance students' interest in learning. Normah (2013) states the mastery of thinking skills has convinced students to think independently without asking the teacher. Students have also used their minds to interpret the situations and problems they face.

The findings of this study also proves that students understand the content of the lesson better through differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language. Apart from just memorizing the facts, students also feel they are more interested in Malay language lessons than ever before. Students also master the Malay language subject content and can apply it in other subjects.

To establish a positive attitude towards differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language, instructors must also play an important role. This is supported by Zamri (2014) who argues that teachers need to train students to find information with a critical attitude. He also suggested methods of discovery and questionnaire used in the teaching and learning process. Zamri (2014, 2015) as well as Zamri, Ruslin and Mohamed Amin (2015) found that teaching strategies based on students such as small groups and problem solving have significant correlation with learning opportunities in R&D. The findings of this study demonstrates the same through differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language.

STUDENT READINESS TOWARDS DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF MALAY LANGUAGE

In overall, this study reveals that students' readiness towards differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language was high, with a total mean score of 4.08 and the standard deviation of 0.693. Analysis showed that the involvement of students in differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language had the highest mean of 4.34. This is because the use of differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language provide choice for students to participate in group activities and active during the question and answer session with the teacher. Group work increases the understanding of the students in Malay language and is fun for students as they interact with other students. A high level of readiness means a high interest in the student towards differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language. On the other hand, low level of readiness indicates the opposite.

Syahida Nadia (2014) found that students showed high readiness in learning Malay when taught using the constructivist approach. In this study, the use of differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language, contributes to students' readiness, particularly the female students. According to Zamri (2015), the diversity of differentiated teaching strategies provided to the students significantly influences their attitude and readiness. Thus, the practice of differentiated instruction strategies in the teaching and learning of Malay language makes learning more fun for the students.

CONCLUSION

Differentiated teaching strategies provide the right environment needed by gifted and talented students in learning Malay language. Through the differentiated teaching strategies, the students are provided with platforms for them to think fast in learning. Differentiated teaching strategies help to raise the level of proficiency among the gifted students especially in the teaching and learning of Malay language. Through this approach, students can raise the level of understanding and knowledge learned. The understanding of what is being taught will increase when the students are appropriately challenged and

encouraged to use their thinking skills. Therefore, the present study clearly shows that differentiated instruction strategies applied in the teaching and learning of Malay language are beneficial.

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